

The Loqqe Massacre: Justice Delayed is Justice Denied

12 years has passed since innocent Sidama civilians were massacred, and not only the victim's loved ones, but all Sidama people have been seeking justice be served. As the 12th year anniversary of the massacre draws to close it is make or break time for Sidama people at home and abroad to come together and deliver on this. An English philosopher Edmund Burke once said, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing".

Nearly 12 years ago, administration of current government issued an order to take over administration of Awassa town and relocate Sidama administration to another town. As Awassa has been cultural and social center of the Sidama people for hundreds of years, this daring order created surprise and anger among Sidama people. In response, hundreds of thousands of Sidama people, from all walks of life staged a peaceful demonstration demanding the reversal of this illegal decision. The plan was to start the demonstration at Loqqe village and to conclude at Awassa city Meskel Square. However, instead of listening to the people, the regime conspired to seize the moment to give a lesson to anyone, even beyond Awassa, who ever opposes the regime's selfish interest that solely serves only few people.

An ad hoc meeting that summoned a day before the massacre and attended by top officials of the regime, concluded by attendees agreeing to crash the peaceful quest by force. Their names and positions then and now are listed in the following table. Only two attendees, Mr. Wakayo Damassa and Mr. Girma Chuluke opposed this mindless decision. Federal army unit known as *Rapid Acting Force* was called up on and arrived over night to carry out the meeting consensus. In the morning, once the people gathered at Loqqe area and barely started their demonstration, shoot and kill order was issued and many people were killed instantly, including 10 years old child. Many wounded ones lost their lives due to lack of medical attention, many thrown into jail cells for taking part in the demonstration, and many become unemployed merely for speaking up against such wicked action. In the face of evil, they all paid ultimate sacrifice that present and future generations of Sidama may live free.

Despite requests from international organizations such as human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and European Union to justice be served, EPRDF has refused to take action against those who ordered and conspired to implement the massacre. As 12 year anniversary is only 3 months away, the members of the administration who ordered this brutal massacre and human rights abuse have never been brought before justice. Instead they have been elevated to higher positions that the regime could offer. It came as no surprise to realize that the inner circle of Zenaw's administration consists the recycled criminal individuals, who have no slightest regard for human rights, and do not have moral ground to rule over Sidama people.

The following table shows their names, their positions then (12 years ago) and now.

	Their Name	Their Position at the time of Massacre	Their Position Now
1	Abadull Gamada	Defense Minister and Chairman of OPDO	House Speaker
2	Girma Biru	Industry Minister and Vice Chairman of OPDO	US, Ethiopian Ambassador
3	Bereket Simion	Information Minister	Security Advisor
4	Mulugeta Alemseged	Advisor of Meles Zenaw, Prime Minister	Italy, Ethiopian Ambassador
5	Taddese Kassa	Vice chairman of both Amhara region and ANDM	-A member of the executive committee of the EPRDF -A comrade-in-party of the ANDM
6	Hailemariam Dessalegn	President of Southern Region	Prime minister
7	Melese Marimo	Vice President of Southern Region	Special advisor to Prime Minister
8	Shiferaw Shigute	Southern Region Finance head	Education Minister

As it has done for past 12 years, SLF calls for arrest and punishment of perpetrators of this heinous crime. Sidama people at home and abroad must unite at 12th Anniversary of Looqqe massacre for justice to prevail.

Victory to Sidma people!!